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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/20/2007
LAST UPDATED 2/28/2007

SPONSOR Lovejoy HB _____

SHORT TITLE Water Quality Control Commission Members SB 1170/aSCONC

ANALYST McOlash

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HB 998.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of the SCONC Amendment

The Senate Conservation Committee amendment to SB 1170 increases the number of Governor appointees on the WQCC from three to four. If enacted, the WQCC would have a total of 14 members.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 1170 amends Section 74-6-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1967, Chapter 190, Section 3, as amended) to add the Secretary of Health or a member of the Health Secretary's staff designated by the Secretary to the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC).

The bill also provides some gender-neutral clean-up language.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The current WQCC is made up of 12 representatives: one from each of eight constituent state agencies, one local government, and three members of public. At the time of this designation, Health and Environment were one agency. When the agencies split, the seat went to the Environment Department.

Evaluation and protection of public health is a specific mandate of the WQCC. The Department of Health is the agency with statutory access to individual health outcome data in the state to evaluate waterborne disease outcomes. This includes giardia and other waterborne pathogens, as well as birth defects, cancer, or other adverse health effects potentially associated with drinking water contaminants. The Department of Health also has toxicology and epidemiology expertise to conduct these evaluations, establish and review health effect registries, and conduct disease surveillance.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Together with the federal Clean Water Act, the New Mexico Water Quality Act governs the protection of surface and ground water in the state. The act requires that the state Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) adopt a comprehensive water quality management plan and establish water quality standards for surface and ground water that “at a minimum protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Water Quality Act.”

BM/nt